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STADTBIBLIOTHEK
FRANKFURT A. M.

# The Kabalah[1] and the Kabalists at the Close of the Nineteenth Century[2]

UNIVERSAL aspirations, especially when impeded and suppressed in their free manifestation, die out but to return with tenfold power. They are cyclic, like every other natural phenomenon, whether mental or cosmic, universal or national. Dam a river in one place, and the water will work its way into another, and break out through it like a torrent.

One of such universal aspirations, the strongest perhaps in man's nature, is the longing to seek for the unknown; an ineradicable desire to penetrate below the surface of things, a thirst for the knowledge of that which is hidden from others. Nine children out of ten will break their toys to see what there is inside. It is an innate feeling and is Protean in

[1] The spelling of the word is various; some write Cabbalah, others Kabbalah. The latest writers have introduced a new spelling as more consonant with the Hebrew manner of writing the word and make it *Qabalah*. This is more grammatical, perhaps, but as no Englishman will ever pronounce a foreign name or word but in an Englishified way, to write the term simply Kabalah seems less pretentious and answers as well.

[2] Reprinted from *Lucifer*, Vol. X.

form. It rises from the ridiculous (or perhaps rather from the reprehensible) to the sublime, for it is limited to indiscreet inquisitiveness, prying into neighbours' secrets, in the uneducated, and it expands in the cultured into that love for knowledge which ends in leading them to the summits of science, and fills the Academies and the Royal Institutions with learned men.

But this pertains to the world of the objective. The man in whom the metaphysical element is stronger than the physical, is propelled by this natural aspiration towards the mystical, to that which the materialist is pleased to call "superstitious belief in the supernatural". The Church, while encouraging our aspirations after the holy—on strictly theological and orthodox lines, of course—condemns at the same time the human craving after the same, whenever the practical search after it departs from its own lines. The memory of the thousands of illiterate "witches" and the hundreds of learned alchemists, philosophers and other heretics, tortured, burnt, and otherwise put to death during the Middle Ages, remains as an ever-present witness to that arbitrary and despotic interference.

In the present age both Church and Science, the blindly-believing and the all-denying, are arrayed against the Secret Sciences, though both Church and Science believed in and practised them—especially the Kabalah—at a not very distant period of history. One says now: "It is of the devil!" the other that "the devil is a creation of the Church,

and a disgraceful superstition"; in short that there is neither devil nor occult sciences. The first one forgets that it has publicly proclaimed, hardly four hundred years ago, the Jewish Kabalah as the *greatest witness* to the truths of Christianity![1] the second, that the most illustrious men of science were all alchemists, astrologers and magicians—witness Paracelsus, Van Helmont, Roger Bacon, etc. But consistency has never been a virtue of Modern Science. It has religiously believed in all which it now denies, and it has denied all that it now believes in, from the circulation of the blood up to steam and electric power.

This sudden change of attitude in both powers cannot prevent events from taking their natural course. The last quarter of our century is witnessing an extraordinary outbreak of occult studies, and Magic dashes once more its powerful waves against the rocks of Church and Science, which it is slowly but as surely undermining. Anyone whose natural mysticism impels him to seek for sympathetic contact with other

[1] This is demonstrated by what we know of the life of John Picus de Mirandola. Ginsburg and others have stated the following facts, namely, that after having studied the Kabalah, Mirandola "found that there is more Christianity than Judaism in the Kabalah; he discovered in it proofs of the doctrines of the Trinity, the Incarnation, the Divinity of Christ, the heavenly Jerusalem, the fall of the Angels," and so on. "In 1486, when only twenty-four years old, he published 900 theses, which were placarded in Rome (not without the consent or knowledge surely of the Pope and his Government), and which he undertook to defend in the presence of all European scholars, whom he invited to the Eternal City, promising to defray their travelling expenses. Among the theses was the following: 'No science yields greater proof of the Divinity of Christ than magic and the Cabbalah.'" The reason why will be shown in the present article.

minds, is astonished to find how large a number of persons are not only interested in Mysticism generally, but are actually themselves Kabalists. The river dammed during the Middle Ages has flowed since noiselessly underground, and has now burst up as an irrepressible torrent. Hundreds to-day study the Kabalah, where scarcely one or two could have been found some fifty years ago, when fear of the Church was still a powerful factor in men's lives. But the long-pent-up torrent has now diverged into two streams—Eastern Occultism and the Jewish Kabalah; the traditions of the Wisdom-Religion of the races that preceded the Adam of the "Fall"; and the system of the ancient Levites of Israel, who most ingeniously veiled a portion of that religion of the Pantheists under the mask of monotheism.

Unfortunately many are called but few chosen. The two systems threaten the world of the mystic with a speedy conflict, which, instead of increasing the spread of the One Universal Truth, will necessarily only weaken and impede its progress. But the question is not, once more, which is *the* one truth, for both are founded upon the eternal verities of prehistoric knowledge, as both, in the present age and the state of mental transition through which humanity is now passing, can give out only a certain portion of these verities. It is simply a question: "Which of the two systems contains most unadulterated facts; and, most important of all—which of the two presents its teachings in the most Catholic (*i.e.*, unsectarian) and impartial manner?" One—the Eastern system—has

veiled for ages its profound pantheistic unitarianism with the exuberance of an exoteric polytheism; the other—as said above—with the screen of exoteric monotheism. Both are but masks to hide the sacred truth from the profane; for neither the Āryan nor the Semitic philosophers have ever accepted either the anthropomorphism of the many Gods, or the personality of the one God, as a philosophical proposition. But it is impossible, within the limits we have at our disposal, to attempt to enter upon a minute discussion of this question. We must be content with a simpler task. The rites and ceremonies of the Jewish law seem to be an abyss, which long generations of Christian Fathers, and especially of Protestant Reformers, have vainly sought to fill in with their far-fetched interpretations. Yet all the early Christians, Paul and the Gnostics, regarded and proclaimed the Jewish law as essentially distinct from the new Christian law. St. Paul called the former an allegory, and St. Stephen told the Jews an hour before being stoned that they had not even kept the law that they received from the angels (the æons), and as to the Holy Ghost (the impersonal Logos or Christos, as taught at Initiation) they had resisted and rejected it as their fathers had done (*Acts*, vii). This was virtually telling them that their law was inferior to the later one. Notwithstanding that the Mosaic Books, which we *think* we have in the *Old Testament*, cannot be more than two or three centuries older than Christianity, the Protestants have nevertheless made of them their

Sacred Canon, on a par with, if not higher than, the Gospels. But when the *Pentateuch* was written, or rather *re-written* after Ezdras, *i.e.*, after the Rabbis had settled upon a new departure, a number of additions were made which were taken bodily from Persian and Babylonian doctrines; and this *at a period subsequent to the colonisation of Judea* under the authority of the kings of Persia. This re-editing was of course done in the same way as with all such Scriptures. They were originally written in a secret key, or cipher, known only to the Initiates. But instead of adapting the contents to the highest spiritual truths as taught in the *third*, the highest, degree of Initiation, and expressed in symbolical language—as may be seen even in the exoteric *Purāṇas* of India—the writers of the *Pentateuch*, revised and corrected, they who cared but for earthly and national glory, adapted only to astro-physiological symbols the supposed events of the Abrahams, Jacobs, and Solomons, and the fantastic history of their little race. Thus they produced, under the mask of monotheism, a religion of sexual and phallic worship, one that concealed an adoration of the Gods, or the lower æons. No one would maintain that anything like the dualism and the angelolatry of Persia, brought by the Jews from the captivity, could ever be found in the *real* Law, or Books of Moses. For how, in such case, could the Sadducees, who reverenced that Law, reject angels, as well as the soul and its immortality? And yet angels, if not the soul's immortal nature, are distinctly asserted to

exist in the *Old Testament*, and are found in the Jewish modern scrolls.[1]

This fact of the successive and widely differing redactions of that which we loosely term the Books of Moses, and of their triple adaptation to the first (lowest), second, and third or highest, degree of Sodalian initiation and that still more puzzling fact of the diametrically opposite beliefs of the Sadducees and the other Jewish sects, all accepting, nevertheless, the same *Revelation*—can be made comprehensible only in the light of our Esoteric explanation. It also shows the reason why, when Moses and the Prophets belonged to the Sodalities (the great Mysteries), the latter yet seem so often to fulminate against the abominations of the Sodales and their "Sod". For had the Old Canon been translated literally, as is claimed, instead of being adapted to a monotheism absent from it, and to the spirit of each sect, as the differences in the Septuagint and Vulgate prove, the following contradictory sentences would be added to the hundreds of other inconsistencies in "Holy Writ". "*Sod* Ihoh (the mysteries of Johoh, or Iehovah) are for those who fear him," says *Psalm* xxv, 14, mistranslated "the secret of the Lord is with them that fear him.". Again "Al (El.) is terrible in the great Sod of the Kadeshim" is rendered as—"God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints" (Psalm lxxxix, 7). The

[1] This is just what the Gnostics had always maintained quite independently of the Christians. In their doctrines the Jewish God, the "Elohim," was a hierarchy of low terrestrial angels—an *Ildabaoth*, spiteful and jealous.

title of Kadeshim (Kadosh sing.) means in reality something quite different from saints, though it is generally explained as "priests," the "holy" and the "*Initiated*"; for the Kadeshim were simply the *galli* of the abominable mysteries (Sod) of the exoteric rites. They were, in short, the male Nautches of the temples, during whose initiations the *arcanum*, the *Sod* (from which "Sodom," perchance,) of physiological and sexual evolution, were divulged. These rites all belonged to the first degree of the Mysteries, so protected and beloved by David—the "friend of God". They must have been very ancient with the Jews, and were ever abominated by the true Initiates; thus we find the dying Jacob's prayer is that his soul should not come into the *secret* (*Sod*, in the original) of Simeon and Levi (the priestly caste) and into their *assembly* during which they "slew a man" (*Genesis*, xlix, 5, 6) [1]. And yet Moses is claimed by the Kabalists as chief of the *Sodales*! Reject the explanation of the *Secret Doctrine* and the whole *Pentateuch* becomes the abomination of abominations.

Therefore do we find Jehovah, the anthropomorphic God, everywhere in the *Bible*, but of AIN SUPH not one word is said. And therefore, also, was the Jewish metrology quite different from the numeral methods of other people. Instead of serving as an adjunct to other

[1] To "*slay a man*" meant, in the sybolism of the Lesser Mysteries, the rite during which crimes against nature were committed, for which purpose the Kadashim were set aside. Thus Cain "slays" his brother Abel, who, esoterically, is a female character and represents the first *human* woman in the Third Race after the separation of sexes. See also *The Source of Measures*, pp. 253, 283, etc.

pre-arranged methods, to penetrate therewith as with a key into the hidden or implied meaning contained within the literal sentences—as the initiated Brahmins do to this day, when reading their sacred books—the numeral system with the Jews, is, as the author of *Hebrew Metrology* tells us, the Holy Writ itself: "That very thing, *in esse*, on which, and out of which, and by the continuous interweaving use of which, the very text of the Bible has been made to result, as its enunciation, from the beginning word of *Genesis* to the closing word of *Deuteronomy*."

So true is this, indeed, that the authors of the *New Testament*, who had to blend their system with both the Jewish and the Pagan, had to borrow their most metaphysical symbols not from the *Pentateuch*, or even the Kabalah, but from the Āryan astro-symbology. One instance will suffice. Whence the dual meaning of the First-born, the Lamb, the Unborn, and the Eternal—all relating to the Logos or Christos? We say from the Samskṛt *Aja*, a word the meanings of which are: (*a*) the Ram, or the Lamb, the first sign of the Zodiac, called in astronomy *Mesha*; (*b*) the Unborn, a title of the first Logos, or Brahmā, the self-existent cause of all, described and so referred to in the *Upanishads*.

The Hebrew Kabalistic Gematria, Notaricon, and T'mura are very ingenious methods, giving the key to the secret meaning of Jewish symbology, one that applied the relations of their sacred imagery only to one side of Nature—namely, the physical side. Their myths and the

names and the events attributed to their Biblical personages were made to correspond with astronomical revolutions and sexual evolution, and had nought to do with the spiritual states of man; hence no such correspondences are to be found in the reading of their sacred canon. The real Mosaic Jews of the Sodales, whose direct heirs *on the line of initiation* were the Sadducees, had no spirituality in them, nor did they feel any need for it apparently. The reader, whose ideas of Initiation and Adeptship are intimately blended with the mysteries of the after-life and soul survival, will now see the reason for the great yet natural inconsistencies found on almost every page of the *Bible*. Thus, in the *Book of Job*, a Kabalistic treatise on Egypto-Arabic Initiation, the symbolism of which conceals the highest spiritual mysteries, one finds yet this significant and purely materialistic verse: "Man born of a woman is . . . like a flower, and is cut down: he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not" (xiv, 1, 2). But Job speaks here of the *personality*, and he is right; for no Initiate would say that the personality long survived the death of the physical body; the spirit alone is immortal. But this sentence in *Job*, the oldest document in the *Bible*, makes only the more brutally materialistic that in *Ecclesiastes*, iii, 19, *et seq.*, one of the latest records. The writer, who speaks in the name of Solomon, and says that "that which befalleth the *sons of men befalleth beasts*, even . . . *as the one dieth so dieth the other* . . . so that a man hath no pre-eminence above a beast," is quite on a par with the

modern Hæckels, and expresses only that which he thinks.

Therefore, no knowledge of Kabalistic methods can help one in finding that in the *Old Testament* which has never been there since the *Book of the Law* was re-written (rather than found) by Hilkiah. Nor can the reading of the Egyptian symbols be much helped by the mediæval Kabalistic systems. Indeed it is but the blindness of a pious illusion that can lead anyone to discover any spiritual and metaphysical correspondences or meaning in the Jewish purely astro-physiological symbology. On the other hand, the ancient pagan religious systems, so-called, are all built upon abstract spiritual speculations, their gross external forms being, perhaps, the most secure veil to hide their inner meaning.

It can be demonstrated, on the authority of the most learned Kabalists of our day, that the *Zohar*, and almost all the Kabalistic works, have passed through Christian hands. Hence, they cannot be considered any longer as universal, but have become simply sectarian. This is well shown by Picus de Mirandola's thesis upon the proposition that "no Science yields greater proof of the divinity of Christ than magic and the Kabalah". This is true of the divinity of the Logos, or of the Christos of the Gnostics; because that Christos remains the same WORD of the ever-unmanifested Deity, whether we call it Parabrahm or Ain Suph—by whatever name he himself is called—Kṛṣhṇa, Buḍḍha, or Ormazd. But this Christos is neither the Christ of the Churches,

nor yet the Jesus of the Gospels; it is only an *impersonal Principle*. Nevertheless the Latin Church made capital of this thesis, the result of which was that, as in the last century, so it is now in Europe and America. Almost every Kabalist is now a believer in a *personal* God, in the very teeth of the original *impersonal* Ain Suph, and is, moreover, a more or less heterodox, but still a Christian. This is due entirely to the ignorance of most people (*a*) that the *Kabalah* (the *Zohar*, especially) we have, is not the original *Book of Splendour*, written down from the oral teachings of Simon Ben Jochai; and (*b*) that the latter, being indeed an exposition of the hidden sense of the writings of Moses (so-called), was as equally good an exponent of the Esoteric meaning contained under the shell of the literal sense in the Scriptures of any Pagan religion. Nor do the modern Kabalists seem to be aware of the fact that the Kabalah as it now stands, with its more than revised texts, its additions made to apply to the *New* as much as to the *Old* Testament, its numerical language recomposed so as to apply to both, and its crafty veiling, is no longer able now to furnish all the ancient and primitive meanings. In short that no Kabalistic work now extant among the Western nations can display any greater mysteries of nature than those which Ezra & Co., and the later co-workers of Moses de Leon, desired to unfold; the Kabalah contains no more than the Syrian and Chaldean Christians and ex-Gnostics of the thirteenth century wanted those works to reveal. And what they do reveal hardly

repays the trouble of passing one's life in studying it. For if they may, and do, present a field of immense interest to the Mason and mathematician, they can teach scarcely anything to the student hungering after spiritual mysteries. The use of all the seven keys to unlock the mysteries of Being in this life, and the lives to come, as in those which have gone by, shows that the Chaldean *Book of Numbers*, and the *Upanishads* undeniably conceal the most divine philosophy—as it is that of the Universal Wisdom Religion. But the *Zohar*, now so mutilated, can show nothing of the kind. Besides which, who of Western philosophers or students has *all* those keys at his command? These are now entrusted only to the highest Initiates in *Gupta Vidyā*, to great Adepts; and, surely it is no self-taught tyro, not even an isolated mystic, however great his genius and natural powers, who can hope to unravel *in one life* more than one or two of the lost keys.[1]

[1] The writer in the *Masonic Review* is thus quite justified in saying as he does, that "the Kabalistic field is that in which astrologers, necromancers, black and white magicians, fortune-tellers, chiromancers, and all the like, revel and make claims to supernaturalism *ad nauseam*": and he adds: "The Christian, quarrying into its mass of mysticism, claims its support and authority for that most perplexing of all problems, the Holy Trinity, and the portrayed character of Christ. With equal assurance, but more effrontery, the knave, in the name of Cabbalah, will sell amulets and charms, tell fortunes, draw horoscopes, and just as readily give specific rules . . . for raising the dead, and actually—the devil . . . Discovery has yet to be made of what Cabbalah really consists, before any weight or authority can be given to the name. On that discovery will rest the question whether the name should be received as related to matters worthy of rational acknowledgment." *The writer claims that such a discovery has been made*, and that the same embraces rational science of sober and great worth. "The

The key to the Jewish metrology has been undeniably unravelled and a very important key it is. But as we may infer from the words of the discoverer himself in the foot-note just quoted—though that key (concealed in the sacred Metrology) discloses the fact that "Holy Writ" contains a rational science of sober and great worth, yet it helps to unveil no higher spiritual truth than that which all astrologers have insisted upon in every age; *i.e.*, the close relation between the sidereal and all the terrestrial bodies . . . human beings included. The history of our globe and its humanities is prototyped in the astronomical heavens from first to last, though the Royal Society of Physicists may not become aware of it for ages yet to come. By the showing of the said discoverer himself, "the burden of this secret doctrine, this Cabbalah, is of pure truth and right reason, for it is geometry with applied proper numbers, of astronomy and of a system of measures, *viz.*, the Masonic inch, the twenty-four inch gauge (or the double foot), the yard, and the mile. These were claimed to be of divine relation and importation, by the possession and use of which, it could be said of Abram: 'Blessed of the Most High God, Abram, measure of heaven and earth'"—the "*creative law of measure*".

And is this all that the *primitive* Kabalah contained? No; for the author remarks elsewhere: "What the originally intended and right reading was (in the *Pentateuch*), who can tell?"—thus allowing

Cabbalah," from the *Masonic Review* for September, 1885, by Brother J. Ralston Skinner (Millian Lodge, No. 141).

the reader to infer that the meanings implied in the exoteric or dead letter of the Hebrew texts, are by no means only those revealed by metrology. Therefore are we justified in saying that the Jewish Kabalah, with its numerical methods, is now only *one* of the keys to the ancient mysteries, and that the Eastern or Āryan systems alone can supply the rest and unveil the whole truth of *Creation*.[1]

What this numeral system is, we leave its discoverer to explain himself. According to him:

Like all other human productions of the kind, the Hebrew text of the Bible was in characters which could serve as sound signs for syllable utterance, or for the purpose of what are called letters. Now in the first place, these original character signs were also pictures, each one of them; and these pictures of themselves stood for ideas which could be communicated, much like the original Chinese letters. Gustav Seyffarth shows that the Egyptian hieroglyphics numbered over 600 picture characters, which embraced the modified use, syllabically, of the original number of letters of the Hebrew alphabet. The characters of the Hebrew text of the sacred scroll were divided into classes, in which the characters of each class were interchangeable; whereby one form might be exchanged for another to carry a modified signification, both by letter,

[1] Even as it stands now, the Kabalah, with its several methods, can only puzzle by offering several versions; it can never divulge the whole truth. The readings of even the first sentence of *Genesis* are several. To quote the author: "It is made to read 'Brahith bara Elohim,' etc., 'In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth,' wherein Elohim is a plural nominative to a verb in the third person singular. Nachminedes called attention to the fact that the text might suffer the reading, 'Brash ithbara Elohim,' etc., 'In the head (source or beginning) created itself (or developed) *gods, the heavens and the earth*, really a more grammatical rendering'." (*Ibid.*). And yet we are forced to believe the Jewish monotheism!

and picture, and number. Seyffarth shows the modified form of the very ancient Hebrew alphabet in the old Coptic by this law of interchange of characters.[1] This law of permitted interchange of letters is to be found quite fully set forth in the Hebrew dictionaries . . . Though recognised . . . it is very perplexing and hard to understand, because we have lost the specific use and power of such interchange. (Just so!) In the second place these characters stood for *numbers*—as we use specific number signs—though also there is very much to prove that the old Hebrews were in possession of the so-called Arabic numerals, as we have them, from the straight line 1 to the zero character, together making 1 plus 9=10 . . . In the third place, it is said, and it seems to be proved, that these characters stood for musical notes; so that, for instance, the arrangement of the letters in the first chapter of *Genesis*, can be rendered musically or by song.[2] Another law of the Hebrew characters was that only the consonantal signs were characterised—the vowels were not characterised, but were supplied. If one will try it, he will find that a consonant of itself cannot be made vocal without the help of a vowel,[3] therefore . . . the consonants made the framework of a word, but to give it life or utterance into the air, so as to impart the thought of the mind, and the feelings of the heart, the vowels were supplied.

Now, even if we suppose, for argument's sake, that the "framework," *i.e.*, the consonants, of the

[1] Before Seyffarth can hope to have his hypotheses accepted, however, he will have to prove that (*a*) the Israelites had an alphabet of their own when the ancient Egyptians or Copts had as yet none; and (*b*) that the Hebrew of the later scrolls is the Hebrew, or "mystery language" of Moses, which the Secret Doctrine denies.

[2] Not the Hebrew helped by the Massoretic signs, at all events. See further on, however.

[3] And therefore, as the vowels were furnished *ad libitum* by the Massorets, they could make of a word what they liked!

*Pentateuch* is the same as in the days of Moses, what changes must have been effected with those scrolls—written in such a poor language as the Hebrew, with its less than two dozens of letters—when re-written time after time, and its vowels and points supplied in ever-new combinations! No two minds are alike, and the feelings of the heart change. What could remain, we ask, of the original writings of Moses, if such ever existed, when they had been lost for nearly eight hundred years and then found when every remembrance of them must have disappeared from the minds of the most learned, and Hilkiah has them re-written by Shaphan, the scribe? When lost again, they are re-written again by Ezra; lost once more in 168 B.C. the volume or scrolls were again destroyed; and when finally they reappear, we find them dressed in their Massoretic disguise! We may know something of Ben Chajim, who published the Massorah of the scrolls in the fifteenth century; we can know nothing of Moses, this is certain, unless we become—Initiates of the Eastern School.

Ahrens, when speaking of the letters so arranged in the Hebrew sacred scrolls—that they were of themselves musical notes—had probably never studied Āryan Hindū music. In the Samskṛt language there is no need to so arrange letters in the sacred *ollas* that they should become musical. For the whole Samskṛt alphabet and the *Veḍas*, from the first word to the last, are musical notations reduced to writing, and the two are inseparable.[1] As Homer

[1] See *The Theosophist*, November, 1879, article *Hindū Music*, p. 47.

distinguished between the "language of Gods" and the *language of men*,[1] so did the Hindūs.

The *Devanāgari*—the Samskṛt character—is the "Speech of the Gods" and Sanskṛt the divine language.[2] As to the Hebrew, let the modern Isaiahs cry "Woe is me!" and confess that which "the newly-discovered mode of language (Hebrew metrology), veiled under the words of the sacred Text," has now clearly shown. Read *The Source of Measures*, read all the other able treatises on the subject by the same author.

And then the reader will find that with the utmost goodwill and incessant efforts covering many years of study, the laborious scholar, having penetrated under the mask of the system, can find in it little more than pure anthropomorphism. In man, and on man alone, rests the whole scheme of the Kabalah, and to man and his functions, on however enlarged a scale, everything in it is made to apply. Man, as the Archetypal Man or Adam, is made to contain the

[1] *The Theosophist*, xiv, 289, 290.

[2] The Samskṛt letters are three times as numerous as the poor twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet. They are all musical and are read, or rather chanted, according to a system given in very old Ṭāntrika works (see *Ṭantra Shāstras*); and are called *Devanāgari*, "the speech or language of the Gods". And since each answers to a numeral, and has therefore a far larger scope for expression and meaning, it must necessarily be far more perfect and far older than the Hebrew, which followed the system, but could apply it only in a very limited way. If either of the two languages were taught to humanity by the Gods, surely it is rather Samskṛt—the perfect of the most perfect languages on Earth—than Hebrew, the roughest and the poorest. For once we believe in a language of *divine* origin, we can hardly believe at the same time that angels or Gods or any divine messenger should have selected the inferior in preference to the superior.

whole Kabalistic system. He is the great symbol and shadow, thrown by the manifested Kosmos, itself the reflection of the impersonal and ever-incomprehensible principle; and this shadow furnishes by its construction—the personal grown out of the impersonal—a kind of objective and tangible symbol of everything visible and invisible in the Universe. "As the First Cause was utterly unknown and unnameable, such names as were adopted as most sacred (in *Bible* and Kabalah) and commonly made applicable to the Divine Being, were after all *not so*," but were mere manifestations of the unknowable, such

> in a cosmic or natural sense, as could become known to man. Hence these names *were not so sacred as commonly held*, inasmuch as with all created things they were themselves but names or enunciations of things known. As to metrology, instead of a valuable adjunct to the Biblical system . . . the entire text of the Holy Writ in the Mosaic books is not only replete with it as a system, but the system itself is that very thing, *in esse*,

from the first to the last word.

> For instance, the narratives of the first day, of the six days, of the seventh day, of the making of Adam, male and female, of Adam in the Garden, of the formation of the woman out of the man, of . . . the genealogy of Ararat, of the ark of Noah with his dove and raven . . . of Abram's travel from Ur. . . . into Egypt before Pharaoh, of Abram's life, of the three covenants . . . of the construction of the tabernacle and the dwelling of Jehovah, of the famous 603,550 as the number of men capable of bearing arms . . . the exodus out of Egypt, and the like—all are but so many modes of enunciation of this system of geometry, of applied number ratios, of measures and their various applications.

And the author of *Hebrew Metrology* ends by saying:

Whatever may have been the Jewish mode of complete interpretation of these books, the Christian Church has taken them for what they show on their *first face* and that only. The Christian Church has never attributed to these books any property beyond this; and herein has existed its *great error*.

But the Western European Kabalists, and many of the American (though luckily not all), claim to correct this error of their Church. How far do they succeed and where is the evidence of their success? Read all the volumes published on the Kabalah in the course of this century; and if we except a few volumes issued recently in America, it will be found that not a single Kabalist has penetrated even skin deep below the surface of that "first face". Their digests are pure speculation and hypotheses and—no more. One bases his glosses upon Ragon's Masonic revelations; another takes Fabre d'Olivet for his prophet—this writer having never been a Kabalist, though he was a genius of wonderful, almost miraculous, erudition, and a polyglot linguist, greater than whom there was since his day none, even among the philologists of the French Academy, which refused to take notice of his work. Others, again, believe that no greater Kabalist was born among the sons of men than the late Eliphas Levi—a charming and witty writer, who, however, has more mystified than taught in his many volumes on Magic. Let not the reader conclude from these statements that real, learned Kabalists are not to be found in the Old and New World. There are initiated

Occultists, who are Kabalists, scattered hither and thither, most undeniably, especially in Germany and Poland. But these *will not publish what they know*, nor will they call themselves Kabalists. The "*Sodalian* oath" of the third degree holds now as ever.

But there are those who are pledged to no secrecy. Those writers are the only ones on whose information the Kabalists ought to rely, however incomplete their statements from the standpoint of a *full revelation, i.e.*, of the sevenfold Esoteric meaning. It is they who care least for those secrets after which alone the modern Hermetist and Kabalist is now hungering—such as the transmutation into gold, and the Elixir of Life, or the Philosopher's Stone—*for physical purposes.* For all the chief secrets of the Occult teachings are concerned with the highest spiritual knowledge. They deal with mental states, not with physical processes and their transformations. In a word, the real, genuine Kabalah, the only original copy of which is contained in the Chaldean *Book of Numbers*, pertains to, and teaches about, the realm of spirit, not that of matter.

What, then, is the Kabalah, in reality, and does it afford a revelation of such higher spiritual mysteries? The writer answers most emphatically—No. What the Kabalistic keys and methods were, in the origin of the *Pentateuch* and other sacred scrolls and documents of the Jews now no longer extant, is one thing; what they are now is quite another. The Kabalah is a manifold language; moreover, one whose reading is determined by the dead-letter face

text of the record to be deciphered. It teaches and helps one to read the Esoteric, real meaning hidden under the mask of that dead letter ; it cannot *create* a text or make one find in the document under study that which has never been in it from the beginning. The Kabalah—such as we have it now—is inseparable from the text of the *Old Testament*, as remodelled by Ezra and others. And as the Hebrew Scriptures, or their contents, have been repeatedly altered—notwithstanding the ancient boast that not one letter in the Sacred Scroll, not an iota, has ever been changed—so no Kabalistic methods can help us by reading into it anything besides what there is in it. He who does it is no Kabalist, but a dreamer.

Lastly, the profane reader should learn the difference between the Kabalah and the Kabalistic works, before he is made to face other arguments. For the Kabalah is no special volume, nor is it even a system. It consists of seven different systems applied to seven different interpretations of any given Esoteric work or subject. These systems were always *transmitted* by one generation of Initiates to another, under the pledge of the Sodalian oath, and *they have never been recorded in writing* by anyone. Those who speak of translating the Kabalah into this or another tongue may as well talk of translating the wordless signal-chants of the Bedouin brigands into some particular language. Kabalah, as a word, is derived from the root *Kbl* (*Kebel*) "to hand over," or "to receive" *orally*. It is erroneous to say, as Kenneth

Mackenzie does in his Royal *Masonic Cyclopædia*, that "the doctrine of the Kabalah refers to the system handed down by oral transmission, and is nearly allied to tradition"; for in this sentence the first proposition only is true, while the second is not. It is not allied to "tradition" but to the seven veils or the seven truths orally *revealed at Initiation*. Of these methods, pertaining to the universal pictorial languages—meaning by "pictorial" any cipher, number symbol, or other glyph that can be represented, whether objectively or subjectively (mentally)—three only exist at present in the Jewish system. [1] Thus, if Kabalah as a word is Hebrew, the system itself is no more Jewish than is sunlight; it is universal.

On the other hand, the Jews can claim the *Zohar*, *Sepher Yetzirah* (Book of Creation), *Sepher Dzeniuta*, and a few others, as their own undeniable property and as Kabalistic works.

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[1] Of these three not one can be made to apply to purely spiritual metaphysics. One divulges the relations of the sidereal bodies to the terrestrial, especially the human; the other relates to the evolution of the human races and the sexes; the third to Kosmo-theogony, and is metrological.

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